

# Commission on Conservation & Agriculture



Chairperson	Elisabeth Holder ('22)	
Vice-Chair	Brian Gartner ('23)	
Members	Michael Thomas ('20)	Kate Miller ('23)
	Jane Brawerman ('23)	Larry Owens ('20)
	Katharine Owens ('22)	Bob Daniels ('22)
	Barbara Schukoske ('23)	David Bauer ('22)
	James Miller ('23)	
Alternates	Ellen Lukens ('23)	Judy Konopka ('22)
Staff	Marek Kozikowski, AICP, City Planner	

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was held online. Public Access was provide by:

1. Going to <https://webex.com> and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
2. Launching the WebEx application and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
3. Via telephone at 1-408-418-9388 and the appropriate access code

**Meeting Number/Access Code:** 1298381460

**Event Password:** Conservation

In attendance: Commissioners Elisabeth Holder, Michael Thomas, Jane Brawerman, James Miller, Kate Miller, Bob Daniels, and David Bauer. Marek Kozikowski, City Planner

### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:11pm.

### B. Accept the Agenda

A motion to move to accept the agenda made by Bob Daniels and seconded by James Miller passed unanimously.

### C. Public Forum

None.

### D. Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of Minutes from the June 16, 2020 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting made by Brian Gartner and seconded by James Miller passed unanimously.

### E. Request for Comment

None.

### F. Officers and Committee Reports

#### 1. Chairman's Report

##### i. POCD Update

Marek presented a greenways corridor map for the City. A motion to recommend inclusion of the map into the 2020 POCD, with modification was made by Elisabeth Holder and seconded by Brian Gartner passed unanimously. The modifications are as follows:

1. The Mattabeset corridor should be made wider at the north end of the map to encompass more of the river bank.
2. The Coginchaug corridor should be narrowed to follow the river better and encompass open space.

If you require special accommodations for any meeting, please call the ADA Coordinator at (860) 638-4540, (voice) or (860) 638-4812 (TDD/TTY), or the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 638-4910 at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

3. The corridor boundaries should end at the municipal boundary but can indicate in a way that the greenway continues where appropriate.

## **2. Trails Committee**

### **i. Trails Work at Guida**

There were some downed trees along the trail and Michael Thomas, James Miller and Elisabeth Holder worked to clear the trails.

## **3. Agriculture Committee**

### **i. Farmer's Market Update**

The first farmer's market of the new era was held at the South Green the previous Friday. It was well attended.

### **ii. Farm Survey Update**

Bob Daniels reported that a letter can survey have been drafted. The mailing list will be finalized and the City will assist with the cost of mailing and postage.

### **iii. Urban Soils Health Project**

Jane Brawerman reported that the grant was not awarded for the urban soils health project. There may be another opportunity next year.

## **4. Outreach Committee**

Brian Gartner reported that two events were scheduled but were cancelled during the pandemic. Kate Miller mentioned that this is a good time to publicize the trails and the trails guide. There are bloggers from the Rockfall foundation that might be able to help with communication with the public.

## **5. Open Space Management Committee-**

No update.

## **6. Open Space Acquisition Committee**

### **i. Pending Properties (Livingston, Country Club Rd, Chiaravallo)**

Marek reported that the Livingston property will be subject to Sec 8-24 review by the Planning and Zoning Commission for open space acquisition on the following night.

### **ii. 2020 Acquisitions (Newfield Street, Westlake Drive, Majestic Oaks Drive, and East Street)**

Marek reported that an appraiser is on board and is working on the Majestic Oaks appraisal right now and will continue to the other properties when it is completed.

### **iii. DEEP Open Space Grant**

Marek reported that two appraisals are working independently on yellow book appraisals and anticipate completing them by the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. RiverCOG will be submitting a letter of support.

### **iv. Sunshine Realty, LLC Property**

Marek reported that he was approached by a representative for Sunshine Realty, LLC, which owns about 35 acres of land adjacent near the Guida Farm Conservation Area, asking if the City is interested in acquiring the property for open space. The Commission discussed and suggested that the CT Farmland Trust and the Working Lands Alliance might be interested in assisting the City.

## **G. Old Business**

### **1. Timber Management and Southern Border Safety**

No update.

### **2. Open Space Map Update**

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This section was covered under the Chair's report.

#### **H. New Business**

None

#### **I. Member Forum**

Kate Miller reported that she met with Cathy from the Parks and Recreation Department. Together they reached out to John Hall to discuss having an event, possibly a Kayak Day, when the Land fill trail project.

The Commission discussed the need for improvements and maintenance at the Maple Swamp property and other open space properties. Marek reiterated that a priority in the draft 2020 POCD will be to development a comprehensive open space management and stewardship plan. Funding for maintenance should be more easily secured with a plan.

The Commission discussed how the draft 2020 POCD will look to concentrate new development within already developed areas and create new neighborhood centers along existing transportation corridors. Kate Miller noted that development along the corridors can negatively impact lower income neighborhoods, which have relatively higher population densities.

A motion to include additional comments for the drafting of the 2020 POCD was made by Katie Miller and seconded by Jim Miller passed unanimously. The comments are as follows:

1. Additional language connecting open space acquisition to the existing ranking system noting that open spaces close to higher residential densities has a high value in the ranking system.
2. Infill development of vacant spaces in lower income neighborhoods can cause environmental justice issues by taking away open spaces.
3. Consider harmful effects of increased vehicular traffic when concentrating development in and near established dense neighborhoods.

#### **J. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn made by James Miller and seconded by Bob Daniels passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:39pm.